

Capital Reading

Dulles Tells of CIA Craft But Buttons Lip on Secrets

Reviewed by Chalmers M. Roberts

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THE CRAFT OF INTELLIGENCE. By Allen Dulles. Harper & Row. 277 pp. \$4.95.



Dulles

THERE IS NO NICER FELLOW in Washington than the tweedy, pipe smoking longtime boss of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allen W. Dulles. Nor is there anyone from whom it has been harder to worm a secret.

Hence one is not disappointed, only unhappy, that Dulles has told so little we did not already know about the CIA. Probably one should be forewarned for the title is "The Craft of Intelligence" and Dulles sticks for the most part to just that.

Dulles writes well and fascinatingly on the history of espionage and intelligence, from Sir Francis Walsingham to Wild Bill Donovan and John McCone; from Richard Sorge to Oleg Penkovsky. But in all the modern cases, from the CIA's role in Iran to the U-2, he more often teases than reveals. There is a hint of a boast about Penkovsky, for

example, but no revelation as to this recently executed Soviet citizen's importance in telling the CIA inner Russian secrets.

Quite probably all this is as it should be. Dulles goes to great lengths to defend secrecy in espionage and other forms of intelligence gathering. He is disturbed by what we publish, especially in technical journals, and the records of Congressional hearings. Dulles' view of the American public's "need to know" is a highly limited one and he would foist on the American press the British D notice system and something akin to its Official Secrets Act. Here one must disagree completely.

The public's right to know about its servants is the crux of the CIA problem, for example, in the current South Vietnamese affair. The central problem here, as in the Bay of Pigs fiasco, and on other occasions, is that the CIA has gone too far into para-military operations, strayed too far from intelligence gathering alone.

In a chapter on "myths" about the CIA, Dulles denies flatly that the agency has "made foreign policy." But what of the effect on

policy not of the U-2 concept, in itself brilliant, but the scheduling of the Powers flight on the eve of the Paris Summit Conference? Or of the pressure in one Administration to go forward with the Cuban affair conceived in the prior Administration? Or of the CIA's control of certain American forces in Viet-Nam, however laudable the original intelligence gathering aim?

On the "craft" of intelligence Dulles writes superbly; on the policy role of CIA we are left only with his assertions.

The policy and press issues aside—and it is not easy to put them aside—"The Craft of Intelligence" is one of the most fascinating books of our times, however tantalizing it often is. Certainly no one who wants to understand the full ramifications of the Cold War can afford to miss it.

As an intelligence agency, the CIA has indeed earned some fancy marks. The bad marks, most often have come when policy makers failed to act correctly on the CIA's intelligence or when the agency itself has strayed into the policy realm.